A

PETITION

OF THE

FREEHOLDERS

OF THE

County of *MIDDLESEX*,

PRESENTED TO

His MAJESTY,

The 24th of *May*, 1769,

BY

Mr. Serjeant GLYNN,
JOHN SAWBRIDGE, Esq;
JAMES TOWNSEND, Esq;
The Rev. Dr. WILSON,
GEORGE BELLAS, Esq;
FRANCIS AYSCOUGH, Esq;
And WILLIAM ELLIS, Esq;

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A PETITION, &c.

To the KING's moſt Excellent Majeſty.

The HUMBLE PETITION of the FREEHOLDERS of the County of *Middleſex.*

Moſt Gracious Sovereign!

WE, Your Majeſty's dutiful and loyal Subjects, the FREEHOLDERS of the County of MIDDLESEX, beg Leave, with all affectionate Submiſſion and Humility, to throw ourſelves at Your Royal Feet, and humbly to implore Your Paternal Attention to thoſe GRIEVANCES, of which this COUNTY and the WHOLE NATION complain, and thoſe fearful APPREHENSIONS with which the WHOLE BRITISH EMPIRE is moſt juſtly alarmed.

With great Grief and Sorrow, we have long beheld the Endeavours of certain evil-minded Perſons, who attempt to infuſe into Your Royal Mind, Notions and Opinions of the moſt dangerous and pernicious Tendency, and who pro-

mote

mote and counſel ſuch Meaſures as cannot fail to deſtroy that HARMONY and CONFIDENCE, which ſhould ever ſubſiſt between a Juſt and Virtuous PRINCE and a Free and Loyal PEOPLE.

For this diſaffected Purpoſe, they have introduced into every Part of the Adminiſtration of our Happy, Legal CONSTITUTION, a certain Unlimited and Indefinite DISCRETIONARY POWER: To prevent which is the ſole Aim of ALL OUR LAWS, and was the ſole Cauſe of all thoſe Diſturbances and Revolutions, which formerly diſtracted this unhappy Country; for our Anceſtors, by their own fatal Experience, well knew, that in a State where DISCRETION begins, LAW, LIBERTY and SAFETY end. Under the Pretence of this DISCRETION, or, as it was formerly, and has been lately called — LAW OF STATE — we have ſeen

Engliſh Subjects, and even a MEMBER of the BRITISH LEGISLATURE, arreſted by virtue of a GENERAL WARRANT, iſſued by a Secretary of State, contrary to the LAW of the LAND—

Their HOUSES rifled and plundered, their PAPERS ſeized, and uſed as Evidence upon Trial—

Their BODIES committed to cloſe Impriſonment—

The

The HABEAS CORPUS eluded—

TRIAL by JURY diſcountenanced, and the Firſt LAW-OFFICER of the Crown publicly inſinuating, that JURIES are not to be truſted—

PRINTERS puniſhed by the Miniſtry in the ſupreme Court without a Trial by their Equals—without ANY Trial at all.

The Remedy of the LAW for FALSE IMPRISONMENT barred and defeated—

The Plaintiff and his Attorney, for their APPEAL to the LAW of the LAND, puniſhed by Expences and Impriſonment, and made, by forced Engagements, to deſiſt from their LEGAL Claim—

A Writing determined to be a Libel by a Court where it was not cognizable in the firſt Inſtance; contrary to Law, becauſe all APPEAL is thereby cut off, and inferior Courts and Juries influenced by ſuch Predetermination—

A Perſon condemned in the ſaid Court as the Author of the ſuppoſed Libel unheard, without Defence or Trial—

Unjuſt Treatment of Petitions, by ſelecting only ſuch Parts as might be wreſted to criminate

the

the Petitioner, and refuſing to hear thoſe which might procure him Redreſs—

The Thanks of ONE Branch of the Legiſlature propoſed by a Miniſter to be given to an acknowledged Offender for his Offence, with the declared Intention of ſcreening him from Law—

Attachments wreſted from their original Intent of removing Obſtructions to the Proceedings of Law, to puniſh, by Sentence of arbitrary Fine and Impriſonment, without Trial or Appeal, ſuppoſed Offences committed out of Court—

Perpetual Impriſonment of an Engliſhman without Trial, Conviction, or Sentence, by the ſame Mode of ATTACHMENT, wherein the ſame Perſon is at once PARTY, ACCUSER, JUDGE, and JURY—

Inſtead of the ancient and legal Civil Police, the Military introduced at every Opportunity, UNNECESSARILY and UNLAWFULLY patrolling the Streets, to the Alarm and Terror of the Inhabitants—

The Lives of many of your Majeſty's innocent Subjects deſtroyed by Military Execution—

Such

Such Military Execution ſolemnly adjudged to be legal—

Murder abetted, encouraged, and rewarded—

The Civil Magiſtracy rendered contemptible by the Appointment of improper and incapable Perſons—

The Civil Magiſtrates tampered with by Adminiſtration, and neglecting and refuſing to diſcharge their Duty—

Mobs and Riots hired and raiſed by the Miniſtry, in order to juſtify and recommend their own illegal Proceedings, and to prejudice Your Majeſty's Mind by falſe Inſinuations againſt the Loyalty of Your Majeſty's Subjects—

The Freedom of Election violated by corrupt and undue Influence, by unpuniſhed Violence and Murder—

The juſt Verdicts of Juries, and the Opinion of the Judges, over-ruled by falſe Repreſentations to Your Majeſty; and the Determinations of the Law ſet aſide by new, unprecedented, and dangerous Means; thereby leaving the guilty without Reſtraint, and the injured without Redreſs, and the Lives of your Majeſty's Subjects

at

at the Mercy of every Ruffian protected by Adminiſtration—

Obſolete and vexatious Claims of the Crown ſet on Foot for Partial and Election Purpoſes—

Partial Attacks on the Liberty of the Preſs: The moſt daring and pernicious Libels againſt the CONSTITUTION, and againſt the Liberty of the Subject, being allowed to paſs unnoticed, whilſt the ſlighteſt Libel againſt a MINISTER is puniſhed with the utmoſt Rigour—

Wicked Attempts to encreaſe and eſtabliſh a Standing Army, by endeavouring to veſt in the Crown an unlimited Power over the Militia; which, ſhould they ſucceed, muſt ſooner or later ſubvert the CONSTITUTION, by augmenting the Power of Adminiſtration in Proportion to their Delinquency—

Repeated Endeavours to diminiſh the Importance of Members of Parliament INDIVIDUALLY, in order to render them more dependant on Adminiſtration COLLECTIVELY. Even Threats having been employed by Miniſters to ſuppreſs the Freedom of Debate; and the WRATH of PARLIAMENT denounced againſt Meaſures authoriſed by the LAW of the LAND—

Reſo-

Reſolutions of ONE Branch of the Legiſlature, ſet up as the Law of the Land, being a direct Uſurpation of the Rights of the Two other Branches, and therefore a manifeſt Infringement of the Conſtitution—

Public Money ſhamefully ſquandered and unaccounted for, and all Inquiry into the Cauſe of Arrears in the Civil Liſt prevented by the Miniſtry—

Inquiry into a Paymaſter's public Accounts ſtopped in the Exchequer, though the Sums unaccounted for by that Paymaſter amount to ABOVE FORTY MILLIONS STERLING—

Public Loans perverted to private Miniſterial Purpoſes—

Proſtitution of public Honours and Rewards to Men who can neither plead public Virtue nor Services—

Irreligion and Immorality, ſo eminently diſcountenanced by YOUR MAJESTY's Royal Example, encouraged by Adminiſtration both by Example and Precept.

The ſame DISCRETION has been extended by the ſame evil Counſellors to your Majeſty's Dominions

minions in AMERICA, and has produced to our ſuffering Fellow Subjects in that Part of the World, Grievances and Apprehenſions ſimilar to thoſe of which we complain at Home.

Moſt Gracious Sovereign!

SUCH are the GRIEVANCES and APPREHENSIONS which have long diſcontented and diſturbed the greateſt and beſt Part of Your Majeſty's loyal Subjects. Unwilling, however, to interrupt Your Royal Repoſe, though ready to lay down our Lives and Fortunes for Your Majeſty's Service, and for the Conſtitution as by Law eſtabliſhed, we have waited patiently, expecting a conſtitutional Remedy by the Means of our own Repreſentatives: But our legal and free Choice having been repeatedly rejected, and the Right of Election now finally taken from us by the unprecedented ſeating of a Candidate who was never choſen by the County, and who, even to become a Candidate, was obliged fraudulently to vacate his Seat in Parliament, under the Pretence of an inſignificant Place, invited thereto by the prior Declaration of a Miniſter, that whoever oppoſed OUR Choice, though but with FOUR Votes, ſhould be declared Member for the County. We ſee ourſelves, by this laſt Act, deprived even of the Franchiſes of Engliſhmen, reduced to the moſt abject State of Slavery, and left without Hopes

Hopes or Means of Redreſs but from YOUR MAJESTY or GOD.

Deign then, MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN! to liſten to the Prayer of the moſt faithful of Your Majeſty's Subjects; and to baniſh from Your Royal Favour, Truſt, and Confidence, for ever, thoſe EVIL and PERNICIOUS COUNSELLORS, who have endeavoured to alienate the Affection of Your Majeſty's moſt ſincere and dutiful Subjects, and whoſe Suggeſtions tend to deprive Your People of their deareſt and moſt eſſential Rights, and who have traiterouſly dared to depart from the Spirit and Letter of thoſe LAWS which have ſecured the Crown of theſe Realms to the HOUSE OF BRUNSWICK, in which we may make our MOST EARNEST PRAYERS TO GOD, that it may continue untarniſhed to the lateſt Poſterity.

Signed by

FIFTEEN HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE FREEHOLDERS.